

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION**

MID-PACIFIC REGION

SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

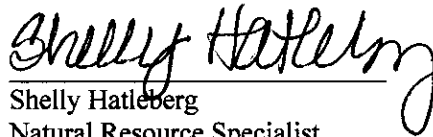
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

**Kern-Tulare Water District
Return of Banked Water**

**Central Valley Project
Sacramento, California**

FONSI 09-11-MP

Recommended by:


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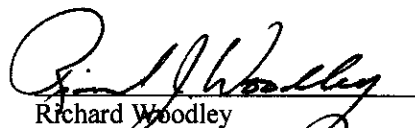
Date: 11/2/09

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Date: 11/2/09

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Date: 11/2/2009



RECLAMATION
Managing Water in the West

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
KERN-TULARE WATER DISTRICT
RETURN OF BANKED WATER
FONSI 09-11-MP**

BACKGROUND

In accordance with Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended, the Bureau of Reclamation has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) for *Kern-Tulare Water District Return of Banked Water*, dated August 21, 2009 and is incorporated by reference.

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, the Kern-Tulare Water District (KTWD) proposes to return a total of up to 2,790 acre feet (AF) of Central Valley Project (CVP) water into the Friant Kern Canal (FKC) for direct delivery within the KTWD to meet its in-District demands for a period of five years beginning in November 2009 and extending through August 2014. Reclamation proposes to approve this return of previously banked CVP water for the KTWD to convey in the FKC for delivery at times when other water supplies are not available. The Proposed Action does not involve any construction activities and would not cause any land use changes.

FINDINGS

In accordance with NEPA, the Mid-Pacific Regional Office of Reclamation has found that the proposed return of banked CVP water is not a major federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Consequently, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. This determination is supported by the following factors:

1. Surface Water Resources: The source of water conveyed pursuant to this approval would be derived from previously banked CVP water in the City of Bakersfield's (City) 2800 acres. Increases or decreases in KTWD surface water supplies would not occur. Water delivered under the Proposed Action would be pumped from existing wells in the City's 2800 acres, and discharged into the Cross Valley Canal (CVC). From the CVC, water would be introduced to the FKC through Kern-Tulare's existing siphons or the FKC/Cross Valley Canal intertie, both located near the terminus of the FKC. The introduction of previously banked CVP water into the CVC and the FKC would not impact conveyance of surface water resources scheduled for the water years covered under this agreement. The previously banked water would be conveyed when capacity is available in the canals.

Water rights held by the United States or others would not be altered. The Proposed Action does not involve any construction activities and would not cause any land use changes. Water conveyed under this action would satisfy the then existing water quality standards for the FKC adopted by Friant Water Authority and Reclamation.

The Proposed Action would not change how water or land is managed. The water returned under the Proposed Action would be used to support irrigated lands already in agricultural production and would not require the use of additional surface water for irrigation. As a result, the Proposed Action would not impact surface water resources.

2. Groundwater Resources: The Proposed Action would involve the return of CVP water previously banked at the City's 2800 Acres. The Proposed Action would not change how groundwater or land is managed. The water returned under the Proposed Action would be used to support irrigated lands already in agricultural production. The water would be used to irrigate existing crops rather than require new surface or groundwater supplies. The City's 2800 Acres is managed as a banking operation, which routinely monitors the groundwater budget to ensure there are no major impacts to groundwater resources. The return of previously banked water would not cause overdraft or impact the groundwater resources in a negative manner. The City's 2800 Acres receives banked water from additional sources, which provides sufficient recharge to groundwater; therefore, the Proposed Action would not impact groundwater resources.

3. Water Quality: Water returned to KTWD under the Proposed Action would satisfy the then existing water quality standards for the FKC adopted by Friant Water Authority and the Reclamation. The Proposed Action would not impact water quality of either surface or groundwater resources.

4. Agriculture and Land Use: The Proposed Action does not involve any construction activities and would not cause any land use changes; therefore, the Proposed Action would not adversely impact land use. Benefits to land use would include the ability of KTWD to deliver this water within their service area at times when other water supplies are not available.

5. Biological Resources: The Proposed Action would involve the return of CVP water previously banked at the City's 2800 Acres. The Proposed Action would not change how water or land is managed. The water returned under the Proposed Action would be used to support irrigated lands already in agricultural production. Existing conveyance would be utilized and no waterways or nesting areas would be created, destroyed or modified in any way under the Proposed Action. Also, with implementation of the Proposed Action, CVP operations would be consistent with existing operating and conveyance agreements. The Proposed Action would be consistent with the actions covered by previous analyses and would not result in any changes from existing operations or conditions. Reclamation has determined that the Proposed Action would have no effect on special status species or migratory bird species with the potential to occur in the project area of effect. Therefore, no further consultation is required under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act.

6. Indian Trust Assets: The Proposed Action does not affect any Indian Trust Assets (ITA). The nearest ITA is a Public Domain Allotment approximately 34 miles east of the project location; therefore there would be no adverse effects to ITAs as a result of the Proposed Action.

7. **Cultural Resources:** The approval of the Proposed Action is the type of activity that has no potential to affect historic properties. There will be no new ground disturbance and the transfers will be accomplished using existing facilities. No new land will be put into agricultural production. Because the action will result in no potential to affect historic properties, there will be no impacts to cultural resources as a result of the implementation of the Proposed Action.

8. **Environmental Justice:** Due to the nature of the Proposed Action (i.e., land use and agriculture would remain unchanged), there would be no adverse effects to minority or disadvantaged populations.

9. **Climate Change:** Since the Proposed Action would have no construction element and would use existing facilities within the range of normal operations, it would have no effect on climate change.

10. **Cumulative Impacts:** In addition to the City's 2800 Acres Recharge Facility, other Kern Fan Area Groundwater Recharge/Recovery Facilities in the Bakersfield area include the Kern Water Bank, Pioneer Project and the Berrenda Mesa Project. In accordance with the California Urban Water Management Planning Act (Act), the City has an Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) that addresses these facilities. The primary objective of the Act is to "direct urban water suppliers to evaluate their existing water conservation efforts, and to the extent practicable, review and implement alternative and supplemental water conservation measures".

The City's Water System adopted and submitted its UWMP in October 2005 and updated it in 2007 based on increased development activities and current conditions within the City. The updated plan describes the management of the groundwater basin to achieve the maximum practicable conservation and efficient use of the water resources. The Proposed Action would have no adverse impacts to these groundwater recharge areas or to the City's management of these areas.

The Proposed Action does not involve any construction or change in water use. It is simply the return of previously banked water from the City's 2800 Acres area back to the FKC via the CVC; therefore, there are no anticipated cumulative effects resulting from the Proposed Action.